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ting its general accordance with that of Antedon. The second part of the memoir and its two last plates are devoted to the development of *Antedon Sarsii*, differing in several interesting particulars from that of *A. rosaceus*, as elucidated by Wyville Thomson and Carpenter. The reader who is acquainted with the extraordinary position of Prof. Sars at the University of Christiania, enabling him to devote himself almost exclusively to scientific pursuits, without being disturbed by the professional duties incumbent on most other scientific men, as curators of museums, lecturers, etc., will acknowledge the zeal and energy with which the author, though in a somewhat advanced age, continues his scientific work, as well as the enlightened liberality of the Representation, who did not hesitate to give an unusual position to a man capable of doing unusual work.

In the "Proceedings of the Academy of Christiania," for 1867, of which I was formerly only capable of giving an incomplete report, you will find some contributions to the geology of Norway (among which a paper by F. Dahl, announcing the discovery of gold and coal, probably Jurassic, in Finmarken, both however apparently not under such circumstances that the discovery can have any practical value), and a discussion about the theory proposed by Prof. Schybeler, that the short time in which the corn plants and other vegetables succeed in ripening their fruits in that northern country, is due partly to the clearness of the nights, the influence of light compensating to a certain degree for the want of heat; but a paper that has a more direct interest for North American readers, is Prof. Sars' "Determinations of a Series of Scottish and North American Glacial Shells and other remains." The Scottish collection embraced fifty species, principally from the Clyde district, of which thirty-three are also found in the glacial and fourteen in the post-glacial beds of Norway; the North American series collected by Dr. Packard, in Maine, Canada and Labrador, consisted of twenty-nine species, twenty-one of which are known from the Norwegian formations, while of the rest three or four are found in the British beds, the remaining four (*Cardita borealis*, *Pandora trilineata*,* *Thracia Conradi*, and *Aporrhais occidentalis*) are not known from this side of the Atlantic, neither in the fossil nor the recent state. — *Copenhagen.*

# NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

## ZOÖLOGY.

New Finner Whale. — The Academy of Natural Sciences has just obtained the perfect skeleton of a whale from the coast of Maryland. It is a finner, of the genus *Sibbaldius* Gray, and is half-grown and fortyseven feet in length. It is quite distinct from all known species, but is nearest *S. laticeps*. Its characters are found in the nasal and phenygoid bones, and in the cervical vertebræ, etc. I call it *S. tectirostris*. Two cervicals only have complete lateral canals; the nasals are short, wide, concave in front, except a prolonged keel in the middle line above, and in front.—EDWARD D. COPE, *Philadelphia*.

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* This was wrongly determined; it is the *Pandora arctica*, a circumpolar species.—A. S. P.

THE CORAL SNAKE.—In the March number of the NATURALIST, pages 36 and 39, Mr. Dall has given an amusing (?) account of his bravado in handling a snake, reputed to be very poisonous by the natives of Nicaragua, and called the "coral snake," which Mr. Dall calls "*Elaps? euryxanthus* Ken.," and says it is "perfectly harmless." It is well known that the genus *Elaps*, which includes a large number of species in tropical countries, all of them banded with bright colors, is closely allied to the notorious asp and viper of the old world, and that, like those deadly species, it is provided with grooved poison fangs, which are, however, quite small and inconspicuous in *Elaps*. We have received several species of *Elaps*, both from the East Indies and tropical America, under the name of "coral snake," and with memoranda stating the deadly character of its bite.

Now since Mr. Dall does not appear to know whether his "coral snake" is an *Elaps* or not, his foolhardiness in handling a snake having such a reputation becomes ridiculous. Of course his snake may have been harmless, and not an *Elaps*, since there are harmless genera so closely resembling *Elaps* as to be indistinguishable by external appearances, but Mr. Dall has not shown that his snake was of this sort, and by placing it in "*Elaps?*," would indicate the contrary.

It may, therefore, safely be said that the only sensible course for strangers to follow, be they naturalists or others, is to avoid unnecessarily exposing themselves to the bites of serpents reputed venomous by the natives of tropical countries.—A. E. VERRILL, *Yale College*.

NORTH ATLANTIC DREDGING EXPEDITION.—The Royal Society has applied to the Admiralty for the use of a steamer in order to continue the investigations so ably commenced by Dr. Carpenter and Prof. Wyville Thompson; and the "Porcupine" has been placed at their disposal. The expedition will take place about the middle of May, and the deep water, from 1100 to 1300 fathoms, near the Rockall Bank, will be the first explored, and afterwards the sea bottom lying off the outer Hebrides and the Shetland Isles.—*Annals of Natural History*.

HEARING OF CRABS.—We do not yet thoroughly understand how they [Crustacea] see, smell, or hear; nor are entomologists entirely agreed as to the function or the structure of the antennæ. This interesting subject offers a most promising field for study, and I would particularly call the attention of entomologists to a remarkable memoir, by Hensen, on the auditory organ in the decapod Crustacea. Hensen has shown that the [supposed] otolithes in the open auditory sacs of shrimps are foreign particles of sand, *introduced into the organ by the animal itself*. He proved this very ingeniously by placing a shrimp in filtered water without any sand, but with crystals of uric acid. Three hours after the animal had moulted, he found that the sacs contained many of these crystals. M. Hensen has also shown that each hair in the auditory sac is susceptible of being thrown into vibration by a particular note, which is probably determined by the length and thickness of the hair. It may be experimentally shown that certain sounds throw particular hairs into rapid vibration, while those around them remain perfectly still.— *Sir John Lubbock in Scientific Opinion.*

A Box Turtle in Winter.—On February 4th, a large Box Turtle (*Cistudo Virginica*) was unearthed while digging in the barn-yard, and brought in, and is at present an inmate of the family,—on mild days travelling over the carpets at a pretty good rate of speed, and at other times taking refuge in dark corners and beneath furniture. Sometimes he is missing, and a grand turtle hunt ensues. We have consulted White's "Selborne," and have hopes of making an "old family tortoise" out of this one. He is a convenient pet now, not requiring to be fed, and is protected from an inadvertent footstep by his armor.—Mrs. V. W., *Rye, N. Y.*

A Doe with Horns.—A young man recently shot a deer of splendid proportions, and carrying a beautiful pair of antlers, each with four branches. It proved to be a doe, and hundreds have since seen it who will attest its sex, none of whom ever before saw a doe with such a *neck* and *horns*. It lies daily in front of the door next to my office, waiting for a bid from Barnum. Can you inform me whether this is a new fact in natural history or not?—L. P. Hatch, *Minneapolis, Minn.*

[We have never heard of a female deer assuming the characters of a male before, but it is well established that female birds, living to old age, often assume the plumage, and to a certain extent the habits of the male. In the Museum of the Academy there is a Pea-hen, that in the spring before her death, at the age of nineteen years, changed her dull female plumage for the bright plumage and full trail of the male bird. N. Vickery, Taxidermist, of Lynn, has the specimen mounted.—Eds.]

Familiarity of a Weasel.—Three times during the month of January last, a weasel came from a pile of logs, and advanced towards a man who was cutting wood in the vicinity, and played about him, quite regardless of the presence of spectators and not disturbed by their conversation. The animal was of a reddish brown color, with a pure white breast.—Mrs. V. W., *Rye, N. Y.*

Fossil Jelly-fishes.—M. Hæckel has described some fossil jelly-fishes belonging to the groups Discophora and Rhizostomida, from the Jurassic, etc., lithographic slates at Eichstadt.—*Cosmos.*

Albino Robins.—Two albinos of the robin were presented to the Buffalo Society of Natural History last autumn. Both were shot near that city.—Charles Linden.